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2003

# The People of the Buses

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### Suggested Citation

Diaz, Alexander, "The People of the Buses" (2003). *All Volumes (2001-2008)*. 109.  
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# The People of the Buses

Alexander Diaz

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This past summer I traveled for a month by bus through four Central American countries. During my month long journey, I traveled for over 70 hours and across 1,800 miles on local buses. My trip started in Belize, from there I made my way to Guatemala, through El Salvador and Honduras then back to Guatemala, finally ending my trip where I began: Belize.

This trip manifested itself in my mind as a result of previous trips I made to Central America. During my prior travels to this region of the world, I became fascinated with the people and culture of these countries. One of the most interesting aspects of their culture was their reliance on the public bus system. I became intrigued with this aspect of their culture, because it was so foreign to what I am accustomed to in America. In America, most people come and go as they wish in their own cars. In these countries that I have traveled through, most people could not afford their own car, so they commuted mainly by bus. Their livelihood depends on their country's bus

system and without these buses, life, as they know would be much different. The buses in these countries are used for everything from transporting the working class to bringing livestock to the markets. Everyday, daily life unfolds on these buses and around these bus stops; people mingle, kiss, laugh, argue, yell, play, cry, and carry on just about any other activity one can think of.

I wanted to capture the daily lives of these people as it took place in and around these buses, as well as record their reliance they had on this method of transportation. I documented my trip a bit differently than a traditional documentary photographer would. Instead of taking pictures of these people with a camera that might be the equivalence of a couple months' income, I photographed them with a twenty-dollar plastic camera. I found it odd pointing an expensive camera toward people that probably could never afford such a luxury item in their lifetime. Also, by using this type of camera, I got a different quality and look to my photographs than what a standard camera would produce.

My month long journey through Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras has brought me a greater understanding of this region's culture and people. This trip also made it possible for me to capture hundreds of images and put together a portfolio, which I entitled "The People of the Buses".

